Economic Growth

646. SHRI SUNDER LAL PATWA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Reforms have lost steam: Alt. Eco. Survey—Data Jugglery" cannot conceal crisis in agriculture, Industry appeared in "Pioneer" dated May 22, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to ensure the real growth of economy with stability?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (c) A news item captioned "Reforms have lost steam: Alt. Eco. Survey—'Data jugglery cannot conceal crisis in agriculture, industry' appeared in the Pioneer, New Delhi, Thursday, May 22, 1997.

The information and analysis presented in the Economic Survey 1996-97 is based on information made available by Government agencies. The Economic Survey was presented to Parliament on 26.2.97. The Economic Survey is the only authentic document presenting the status of the Indian Economy during the current year.

As per the revised estimates released by the CSO in the second week of July, 1997, incorporating the latest estimates of agricultural and industrial production, GDP for the year 1996-97 at factor cost at constant (1980-81) prices shows a growth of 6.8 per cent over the Quick Estimates of GDP for the year 1995-96. Although there is no change in the growth at the overall level from the level estimated earlier, there have been major revisions in the growth rates at the sectoral levels. For example, growth in agariculture, forestry and fishing has been revised up-wards to 5.7 per cent from 3.7 per cent estimated earlier, and that in manufacturing down-wards to 8.1 per cent from 10.6 per cent estimated earlier.

Economic Reforms is a continuous process. Budget 1997-98 has initiated reforms in a number of directions. In addition, a number of steps have been taken to consolidate the gains of reforms initiated earlier.

Export of Rice

647. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether rice is being exported at present; and

(b) if so, the details of different grades of rice exported to various countries during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) The exports of Basmati and Non-Basmati Rice are permitted freely subject to registration of contracts with Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority. The Quantity & Value of Basmati & Non-Basmati Rice exported during the last three years are as follows:-

Qty: Lakh MTs Value: Rs. Crores

Year	Basmati		Non Basmati Rice	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
1994-95	4.42	865.32	4.48	340.47
1995-96	3.73	850.67	45.41	3717.41
1996-97	4.89	1197.75	19.85	1952.83
1997-98 (April-97)	0.23	97.18	0.97	107.52
1996-97 (April-96)	0.61	130.58	3.11	296.52

(Source: DGCI&S, Calcutta)

Country-wise details of exports are given in the monthly bulletin/annual numbers of Foreign Trade Statistics of India published by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Calcutta, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library.

Robberies/Dacoities in Public Sector Banks

648. SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases robberies/dacoities in the public sector banks reported during the years 1994, 1995, 1996 and the current year, so far, state-wise, alongwith the amount involved therein;

(b) the number of bank employees killed or injured during the above robberies/dacoities, State-wise;

(c) whether adequate financial assitance of employment has been provided to the dependent of those employees;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the remedial measures proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (e) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Permanent Account Numbers to Income Tax Payers

649. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Board of Direct Taxes propose to introduce to allot permanent account number (PAN) facility to Income Tax Payers all over the country from 1997-98;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of places where this facility of PAN is available at present;

(d) the outcome of this system and the other features of the scheme;

(e) whether any fine is likely to be imposed on the assessees who fail to get the PAN; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (c) Yes Sir. As part of the Comprehensive Computerisation Plan of the Income Tax Department, a new series of Permanent Account Number has been introduced. In the first phase, Permanent Account Number under new series is being allotted to tax payers in city regions of Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai. Allotment of Permanent Account Number under new series in rest of the country is being taken up in the current financial year.

(d) As against 28.76 lakh assessees on the registers of the Department in the city regions of Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai and 21.44 lakh assessees, who had filed returns during 1996-97, so far 19.70 lakh assessees have applied for Permanent Account Number under new series. So far 14.23 lakh assessees have been allotted Permanent Account Number under new series.

(e) and (f) Failure to comply with the provisions of Section 139 A of the Income-tax Act, 1961 which deals with requirement of obtaining Permanent Account Number, attracts penalty of a sum, which shall not be less than Rs. 500/- but which may extend upto Rs. 10,000/- for each default or failure.

Export of Spices

650. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether after having topped in the spices export during 1995-96, export of chillies declined 7 per cent in quantity terms during 1996-97;

(b) if so, whether small and large cardamon, too, decreased considerably during the previous financial year;

(c) if so, whether chillies replaced pepper as the largest exported commodity among spices during 1995-96;

(d) if so, whether export of small caddamum dipped to an abysmal; and

(e) if so, the main reasons for fall in export of cardamom and chillies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (e) Details of exports of chillies, cardamom (small) and cardamom (large) during 1995-96 and 1996-97 are given below:-

Value Rs. Crores

Qty.: MT

	Item	1995-96		1996-97	
		Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value
(i)	Chillies	56,073	194.15	51,900	209.64
(ii)	Cardamom (Small)	500	12.39	240	9.21
(iii)	Cardamom (Large)	1,784	12.33	1,450	10.47

Exports of chillies during 1995-96 were exceptionally good due to heavy purchases by UAE, Pakistan and Bangladesh as a result of fall in Production in China and Pakistan. While pepper has replaced chillies as the largest commodity exported amongst the spices during 1996-97, exports of chillies have increased 8% in value terms. The decline in exports of small cardamom has been mainly due to stiff price competition offered by Gautemala and increased domestic demand. In case of large cardamom, the decline was due to lesser imports by Pakistan.

Modernised Company Act

651. SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR:

SHRI PRAKASH VISHWANATH PARANJPE:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that apart from corporate entities and apex chambers of Commerce and Industry, lakhs of public investors, debenture holders and depositors who have made investment in the equity of the companies or have lodged this funds with them have substantive interest in the 'Modernised Companies Act' which would replace Companies Act, 1956;

(b) if so, whether the Government have taken any steps to associate these interested groups in formulation of the proposed Companies Act;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government propose to circulate the proposed legislation to elicit public opinion; and

(e) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) The Government constituted on 5.8.1996 a Working Group comprising of persons having knowledge of law, economics and company affairs to submit a working draft of the Companies Bill, 1997. A Working Draft of the Companies Bill was submitted by this Group on 2.5.1997 which was circulated for public debate.